

tax penalty is such a priority. We have answered the call for bringing fairness to the tax code by making the centerpiece of the legislation this House is going to vote on tomorrow legislation which will eliminate for a majority of those 28 million married working couples paying the marriage tax penalty, will eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

In fact, I have an example here of a machinist and a school teacher in Joliet, Illinois. They live in the south suburbs. They have a combined income of \$50,000. Currently under our tax code, because the standard deduction for joint filers, for married couples, is now twice what it is for a single, if you figure in their personal exemptions and then give them the standard deduction when they file jointly, that standard deduction currently is only \$6,900. If we want to be fair about it, the standard deduction for a joint filer should always be twice what it is for single filers. We do that in the tax package we are going to vote on tomorrow. The result is for this machinist and this school teacher in Joliet, Illinois, with a standard deduction now of \$8,500, twice what it is for a single person, they will see a net benefit of \$240 in higher take-home pay as a result of our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

Now, we eliminate the marriage tax penalty for a majority of those married couples who suffer it by doubling the standard deduction. Not only is that an issue of bringing fairness to the tax code but because we double the standard deduction for married working couples, we also simplify the tax code. The reason we simplify the tax code, now as a result of doubling the standard deduction which 28 million married working couples will enjoy and benefit from, seeing an extra \$240 in higher take-home pay, that is an extra car payment, 6 million of those couples will no longer need to itemize. We are simplifying their taxes. In fact they will no longer need to use the Schedule A. All they will need now is just to use the 1040-EZ. That is simplification.

Now, the opponents, some of whom we have heard from this evening and who oppose our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty for a majority of those who suffer it, they claim that somehow our effort to eliminate the marriage tax penalty somehow will hurt and take money out of the Social Security trust fund. Now, there is an important question that was asked in the House Committee on Ways and Means this past week when we acted and produced our effort to save Social Security and eliminate the marriage tax penalty. We asked the representative, the Deputy Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, are those charges true? Is as a result of the tax cut being considered by the committee and of course voted on tomorrow, on Saturday, will there be any impact on the moneys in the Social Security trust fund? Judy Chessier, who is the Deputy Commissioner of the Social

Security Administration, had a very simple answer. Frankly for someone in the bureaucracy, it was very short, sweet and to the point. She said, "No." By saying "no," that means the Social Security trust fund is not impacted.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to vote on a tax package tomorrow that the centerpiece eliminates the marriage tax penalty for millions, in fact the majority of those who suffer it. This package is good because it helps married couples in Illinois, helps family farmers, helps small businesspeople, helps schools in Illinois and helps parents who want to send their kids off to college.

We can save Social Security. We can eliminate the marriage tax penalty. We have a good opportunity to do that tomorrow. It deserves bipartisan support. I urge bipartisan support for the Save Social Security Act which passed today as well as the 1998 Taxpayer Relief Act. Let us save Social Security. Let us eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

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#### CUT TAXES ONLY AFTER TRULY BALANCING THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SNOWBARGER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. MINGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MINGE. Mr. Speaker, I share with the previous Member the commitment to finding a way to reduce taxes. Really the question is, however, not do we have a commitment to reduce taxes and believe that the bill that has been brought up or will be brought up tomorrow is a fair bill in that respect. The question is the timing.

The previous speaker I think laid out quite clearly the issue, and that is to what extent are we selling a phony package to the American people by saying to them we have a surplus and we can balance the budget and go through a tax cut, without somehow compromising our commitment to stay the course and not add to our Nation's debt and not make it more difficult to solve the Social Security problems in the future?

The simple answer is, we do not have a balanced budget. We are borrowing this year approximately \$104 billion from the Social Security trust fund. This money is going into the general fund and supporting Federal programs.

We are going to have a deficit of approximately \$70 billion this year, an on-budget deficit of \$70 billion.

What does this mean? It means that we have not adequately planned for the future. We have not adequately planned for 1998, and we are proposing a tax cut when we have not balanced the budget. I think this is tragic.

It also points up the fact that we do not yet even have a budget for the next fiscal year, and this too is tragic. Here we are, we are five months and 24 days past the deadline for having a budget

agreement in Congress, and we do not yet have one. The House and the Senate have not agreed. No budget resolution.

We do not have guidance for the Committee on Appropriations, we do not have guidance for the Committee on Ways and Means. The committees are free-lancing it. The Committee on Ways and Means has come out with a tax cut package. They do not know how it fits into a budget, because we do not have a budget. And here we are in this chamber saying to state and local government, act responsibly. Act fiscally responsibly, so when we grant you money, we know and you know that you are properly budgeting for your operations.

We say to the United Nations, act fiscally responsibly; prepare a budget. We do not have a budget.

We say to nonprofit entities and others that apply for Federal grants, have a budget. Show us your budget. We do not have a budget.

This is a very, very unfortunate situation. The leadership in this body and on the other end of the building have not even appointed conferees to agree on what a budget resolution should look like and bring it back to each chamber for a vote. We have a failure of leadership. We need to address the question of what is the Federal budget to be for 1999, and we are only six days away from the beginning of the next fiscal year. No budget.

I submit that the tax cut package, as attractive as it is and as much as we all would like to vote on it and go back home and beat our chest and say what wonderful Members of Congress we are, the tax cut package ought to be deferred in terms of its implementation until the leadership in this body has developed a budget for the next fiscal year and until we know that we have eliminated the scourge of the deficit spending that has haunted this government.

We cannot afford to add to the deficit. We cannot afford to add to the debt. I know from talking to my friends and neighbors at home that they are all for tax cuts, but they also recognize that we have to act responsibly, and they want us to make sure we balance the budget first, and they want us to make sure we stop borrowing from Social Security.

We are continuing to do that, and this is going to handicap our ability to fix the Social Security program, because all of that borrowing goes right into the U.S. Treasury and we are postponing the day of reckoning.

#### SHORTFALLS IN FUNDING FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I talked yesterday about the problems with national security that are now becoming

acknowledged, not only by Members of the Congress, but also, for the first time in four years, by the President himself.

Now that the President has admitted that there is a shortfall in funding for national security, the services themselves are coming forward and testifying, as they did today, and telling us what the problem is. They now feel that they are not circumventing their commander-in-chief if they lay their cards on the table before Congress. And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, I was pretty shocked by the numbers and the situations that were described today by the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Air Force, and I want to share those numbers and those shortfalls with you.

First I want to point your attention to what is known as mission capable rates. Mission capable rates mean when we have an aircraft carrier off the shores of the Middle East and we have planes on that carrier. We make an analysis as to whether or not its planes can fly out, hit their targets and return safely to the carrier. That is a pretty important part of our power projection with the U.S. Navy.

Our mission capable rate, that means the ability of the airplane to fly off the carrier, wheels up, move that two or three or four hundred miles to its target, drop its ordnance and come back, that rate has gone down from 69 percent in 1993 to 61 percent today.

With the Air Force, the mission capable rate of their aircraft has gone down from 83.4 percent in 1991 to 74 percent today. That means 25 percent of their aircraft are not mission capable. They cannot do their job.

With the Marines, we have gone down from 77 percent in 1995 to only 61 percent mission capable rate today.

Mr. Speaker, the Navy and the Marine Corps and the Army also talked about other aspects of their equipment that are now in shortfall. You know we had a 600 ship Navy a few years ago under president Ronald Reagan. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, we decided we could bring that Navy down some. But this president, President Clinton, is building ships at such a slow rate that we are building to a 200 ship Navy. We are going from a 600 ship Navy to a 200 ship Navy, and we cannot accomplish our responsibilities around the world with a fleet that small.

With respect to ammunition, the service chiefs told us that our ammunition shortfall now is 1.7 billion for the Army and 193 million for the United States Marine Corps. Ammunition is pretty basic, and we do not have what we need.

With respect to equipment, this CH-46 helicopter is right now the mainstay for the United States Marine Corps until they get the V-22. That aircraft, which has had a number of crashes in the last several years, is over 40 years old. Their attack vehicle, their amphibious vehicle that they ride out of the ships on and go right up on the

beaches when they have to make a front-on assault, that vehicle is an average of 26 years old.

With respect to personnel, the United States Air Force is going to be 700 pilots short this year and the United States Navy is going to be 18,000 sailors short this year. The U.S. Marine Corps aviators are having a separation rate, that means the rate where they come in and tell their unit I am leaving; I could reenlist, but I am leaving; I am going to go into private enterprise. I may be a pilot for an airline, I am leaving. Only 42 percent of them separated in 1995. Most of them stayed on with the Marine Corps. Today, 92 percent of our pilots are leaving. They are getting out of Dodge. They are going into the private sector. That leaves us short.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will continue over the next several weeks to talk a little bit more about the shortages we have in defense, and lastly I will talk a little bit about what we are going to have to do in terms of putting resources into defense to rebuild our military.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POMEROY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### SECURING SOCIAL SECURITY BEFORE CUTTING TAXES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we did several things today, and I do want to comment on one of the earlier speaker's assessment of the pending tax bill, for, as I was saying earlier in debate, we all understand the value of giving relief to working men and women.

Interestingly enough, the substitute tax relief bill that the Democrats are proposing does that very thing. But it has one singular common sense provision: It recognizes that Social Security is a Contract with America. It is a trust. It is a fund that we are committed to securing. You cannot secure a trust fund if you raid it.

So the one difference I have with my colleagues is I am prepared to vote for tax relief, after we have secured Social Security, after we have been told by the Social Security trustees, "You have fixed Social Security for those who are receiving it now, for those who receive it 10 years from now, and those who may receive it way into the next century."

So I hope my colleagues will consider the reasonableness of legislation that does not spend dollars we do not have, and waits in fact a year from now when we can truly confirm that we have fixed Social Security.

Today we did something else, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to just comment briefly on the fast-track legislation, because most of us agree that trade, which creates jobs, has to be a bipartisan approach or has to have a bipartisan approach.

The one thing that is attractive to Americans when you speak of trade is jobs. It is opportunities for small businesses. It is the ability to sell one's wares and ideas internationally and be assured to get a good dollar and fair compensation for that.

I have been on record supporting the African Growth and Opportunity Act which passed the House this past summer, giving opportunity to small businesses, providing dollars for infrastructure support, opening up Africa to the many opportunities or many business opportunities for both Americans and Africans to work together.

I have supported the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which works with our Caribbean friends, again establishing opportunities for our business opportunity, to work free of barriers.

At the same time, this legislation was brought to the floor of the House in a bad manner and at a bad time. For example, we are facing financial crises around the world, but the Republicans have not seen fit to fund the International Monetary Fund. Why? Because that is not popular.

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That sounds off negative connotations. I would simply argue that seeing governments collapse or financial systems collapse, when we have the opportunity to work with the IMF, is irresponsible.

Yet, we bring a trade bill that is not collaborative, does not work with Members on both sides of the aisle, does not work with business and working Americans to discuss issues dealing with the environment and dealing with the question of working conditions.

Last year when we were talking about this issue, I offered an amendment to work on the question of difficulties in Texas along the border. Let me read it, Mr. Speaker, my amendment, called "Review of conditions along United States-Mexican border".

The President shall establish a task force to review conditions along the United States-Mexican border relating to housing, labor, the environment, and other relevant issues, as they relate to United States companies that are located along the border.

The task force should determine the ways in which partnerships made up of public and private entities can improve conditions along the border. The President shall report to Congress not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this act on the results of the review under subsection A.

My understanding is, without a call to my office, this was put into the present bill. The tragedy is that the bill failed because we did not have collaboration. We had politics. In fact, Members of the other party were quoted as saying, "We want to see who will get on the line and vote for fast